



DEPT OF
DEFENSE

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
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MCDC

OTSG/MEDCOM Policy Memo 12-023

14 MAR 2012

Expires 14 March 2014

MEMORANDUM FOR

COMMANDERS, MEDCOM MAJOR SUBORDINATE COMMANDS
DIRECTORS, OTSG/MEDCOM ONESTAFF

SUBJECT: Clearance Procedures for the Public Release of Official Information About the Army Medical Department (AMEDD) Obtained Because of Official Position

1. References:

a. Department of the Army Regulation (AR) 360-1, The Public Affairs Program including multiple references cited in Appendix A, 25 May 11.

b. OTSG/MEDCOM Policy Memo 10-032, 30 Apr 10, subject: Release of Actionable Medical Information.

2. Purpose. To establish Office of The Surgeon General (OTSG)/US Army Medical Command (MEDCOM) policy for the clearance of manuscripts, briefings, presentations, web-based publications, interviews, and other informational materials developed by OTSG/MEDCOM personnel for release in the public domain.

3. Proponent. The proponent for this policy is the Directorate of Communications (DCOMM), Public Affairs Office.

4. Policy. In accordance with reference 1a, most official and unofficial materials written or produced by OTSG/MEDCOM staff require public affairs clearance before being released to the public domain whether through general publications, speeches, web-based products, oral briefings, professional medical journals, or other public channels. Most of these materials can be reviewed at the lowest level by public affairs officers (PAOs) at the same facility as the author(s). Proper clearance ensures that the chain of command is aware of and prepared for the impending impact of public release of sensitive information. Clearance also protects the author(s) from inadvertent release of protected/sensitive information. There is no intent to deny OTSG/MEDCOM employees the right of speaking about or publishing information about the good work they do.

a. If the request for public affairs clearance concerns highly technical or sensitive material that may have a significant public affairs impact, the author(s) should provide a statement of impact when submitting the document for clearance.

* This policy supersedes OTSG/MEDCOM Policy Memo 10-019, 23 Mar 2010, subject: Clearance Procedures for the Public Release of Official Information about the Army Medical Department (AMEDD) Obtained because of Official Position.

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b. Subordinate PAOs may clear documents for release, but they cannot deny release; only HQDA Office of the Chief of Public Affairs (OCPA) can deny release. An OPSEC review at the subordinate level must be completed prior to releasing the document. If a subordinate PAO has concerns about the appropriateness of releasing a document, forward a final, fully-staffed version of questionable material to the MEDCOM DCOMM Public Affairs Office with an explanation of the subordinate PAO's concerns. The MEDCOM DCOMM Public Affairs Office will determine whether the material can be released at MEDCOM level or requires clearance from HQDA, OCPAffairs, Office of Security Review.

c. Examples of materials that require HQDA-level approval for release include, but are not limited to, the following: Matters of potential national or international interest, materials that have foreign policy implications, policy under the purview of other agencies, information with operational security concerns, information about new weapon systems or critical technology, information about weapons of mass destruction, and information that might cause controversy among military Services or other federal agencies (reference 1a, paragraph 5-3 contains a complete listing).

d. Examples of materials that may be released without public affairs clearance include materials not involving any of the prohibitions listed in AR 360-1, paragraph 5-3; works of fiction; materials developed on personal time using personal equipment and open sources; and materials produced by retired service members or retired civilian employees.

e. Technical and scientific materials should be reviewed by PAOs at the lowest level to help determine if the material has potential impact that requires review by a higher level. PAO reviews will be based on the subject matter only, not the technical accuracy or operational security of the contents. It is the author's responsibility to ensure compliance with operations security. Information that appears in open sources does not necessarily constitute declassification. The combination of several open source documents may result in a classified document.

f. Any individual who uses a military title or identifies himself/herself with DoD (e.g., wearing a military uniform) will include a disclaimer with the material. A sample disclaimer is included in the following paragraph. The author will not use a military title or other DoD identification in connection with the release of material if requested to refrain from doing so by reviewing authority.

g. Sample disclaimer: "The views expressed in this article [book, speech, etc.] are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government."

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5. MEDCOM Major Subordinate Command Commanders will ensure their staffs are fully informed of the need for public affairs clearance of selected materials prior to release, and that the staff is knowledgeable about compliance with the process for clearing materials for public release. Subordinate PAOs have received a checklist which facilitates the tracking of documents within the originator's organization before submission.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

Encl
Submission Checklist


HERBERT A. COLEY
Chief of Staff